

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF BUDDHISM

Research Studies Series

PARABLE OF THE SNAKE

a translation of the

ALAGADDUPAMA SUTTA

with an introduction, analysis and notes

Jotiya Dhirasekera

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## Abbreviations

A. Aṅguttara Nikāya (P.T.S.)

BJTS. Buddha Jayanti Tripiṭaka Series, (Sinhala Script) Ministry of  
Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka

D. Dīgha Nikāya (P.T.S.)

FDB. Further Dialogues of the Buddha .

Majjhima Nikāya translated by LORD CHALMERS, Sacred Books of the  
Buddhists, 1926

M. Majjhima Nikāya (P.T.S.)

MA. Majjhima Nikaya Commentary, Papañcasūdanī (P.T.S.)

MLS. Middle Length Sayings : Majjhima Nikāya translated by Miss I. B.  
HORNER (P.T.S.) 1954

Nāṇavimala. Ed. by KIRIELLE NANAVIMALA THERA (Majjhima Nikaya:  
Sinhala Script), Sri Lanka

P.T.S. Pali Text Society

S. Samyutta Nikāya (P.T.S.)

SA. Samiyutta Nikāya Commentary, Sāratthappakāsinī (P.T.S.)

Vin. Vinaya Piṭaka (P.T.S.)

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## Preface

It is with a sense of deep satisfaction that we note that the western world has witnessed more than a hundred years of active Buddhist scholarship centering on Pali studies, particularly through the media of English, German and French languages. Pioneers like Professor and Mrs. Rhys Davids, Oldenberg, and Fausboll blazed a trail which attracted promising young scholars even from the eastern world. It was an epoch-making discovery when they struck a few nuggets of incalculable value, almost on the surface. They were impressed so much by the wholesomeness of the message they discovered in Buddhist texts that they were determined to pass on its benefits to the whole of humanity. Professor Rhys Davids, in his first annual report of the Pali Text Society, wrote in 1882 about this new discovery as follows: ' a valuable series of original documents on one of the most important and interesting chapters in human history '. Both within the Pali Text Society and outside it, the pioneering stalwarts worked assiduously, editing, translating and commenting and they are certainly to be congratulated on what they have achieved in spite of the fact that they worked on an alien culture recorded in an alien tongue. It would, however, be correct to observe that Buddhist thought was far ahead of the times during which Buddhism was first taken up for study in the west, whether it pertains to the religio-ethical, psychological or socio-economic spheres. It is therefore not surprising that the subtlety and significance of the Buddhist observations in most of these areas went un-noticed and un-commented on during these pioneering days. It is now discovered that in many instances such observations in Pali have been translated into English to mean even the very opposite of what they stood for.

In the meantime, Indological studies have made considerable headway both in the east and the west. Linguistic studies in the Indo-Aryan field has contributed to a better mastery of the Pali language and its nuances. The publication of the Pali commentaries on the canonical texts has equipped the student of Buddhism with better tools, more often than not, for a better analysis of the teachings of the

Buddhist texts. This places the student of today in a better position, in contrast to that of the pioneer, with a better vision and a greater capacity for reliable interpretation. But the results, when reviewed, show that they have not been proportionately rewarding.

Recent doctoral and post-doctoral researches undertaken in the field of Buddhist studies have revealed that a large number of misleading interpretations on Buddhism seem to be still at large, leading to further misinterpretations and distortions. It is discovered that these are ultimately traceable to (1) the use of incorrect translations of Buddhist texts (both Pali and Sanskrit), (2) the inability to grasp the correct import of commentarial explanations, due to an inadequate grasp of the Pali idiom as well as unfamiliarity with the origin and development of Buddhist doctrinal concepts, (3) the use, to a lesser degree, of incorrectly edited texts and finally (4) the failure to recognize the specific use of Pali and Sanskrit terms in Buddhist contexts. Many other sins of omission and commission might possibly be added to these.

There is an urgent need today, both from the point of view of the Buddhist and the non-Buddhist, for the early detection of these and for their correction. The longer they stay undetected, the damage they can cause increases rapidly. The infection spreads from one area of study to another, from psychology to ethics, from history to social philosophy.

Consequent distortions of doctrine leave them warped beyond recognition. In this process, a brave new line of thinking which Buddhism initiated in its challenge against unquestioned traditional authority of persons, institutions and revelations and against the subordination of man to a divine will, gets inundated and the world is left the poorer for this reason.

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs takes serious note of this and proposes to remedy this situation. Hence the initiation of this Research Studies Series as an ancillary of the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism which would undertake revised

translations of important Buddhist texts and comprehensive studies of Buddhist themes. It is intended to bring within the scope of this series the exploration of these areas of mistranslation and misinterpretation and to extricate these doctrines from this tangle of confusion and wishful thinking. The latter, often resulting from desire, for more reasons than one, to bring Buddhism into conformity with the 'major religions' of the world : a vain attempt, both unjust and unsound. It is also intended to produce these monograph studies in such a way as to bring to the fore the vital and fundamental doctrines of Buddhism which indeed are indispensable to the Buddhists in their study of world problems of the widest range : the physical and mental health of man, population explosion, man and his destruction of his environment, employment, service and remuneration, power, war and peace, crime and punishment, and numerous others which keep contributing to the increasing misery of man which he inherits as he progresses on the road to civilization.

## Introduction

As the first in this series of Research Studies we have chosen the Alagaddūpama Sutta - the Discourse on the Parable of the Snake [Sutta No. 22 of the Majjhima Nikāya]. After a careful study of its three earlier English translations [1. Further Dialogues of the Buddha by Lord Chalmers, Sacred Books of the Buddhists, 1926 : FDB ; 2. The Middle Length Sayings by Miss I. B. Horner, Pali Text Society, 1954 : MLS. ; 3. The Discourse on the SNAKE SIMILE by Nyānaponika Thera, The Wheel Publication, No. 48/49, Buddhist Publication Society, 1962 : The Wheel] we are of the opinion that the sutta needs to be re-studied and re-translated. As far as the translations go, the Wheel leaves little room for improvement. The FDB. and the MLS. standing 28 years apart, contain a number of serious errors in their translations, some of which are shared while others are of independent origin. Where new errors emerge as a result of corrections made to the earlier translation, one has to be particularly sensitive to note the direction of the deflection [p.13, n.4 and p.15, n.1 are particularly noteworthy].

Taking into consideration all such lapses and profiting by the invaluable services of the earlier translators we have attempted this new rendering of the sutta, desirous of conveying in full its total import. We have used, for the most part, the translation of this sutta in the Middle Length Sayings as the core of this study. For the purpose of making the message of this sutta more intelligible both to the Buddhist and the non-Buddhist, we have added a few explanatory notes, particularly in places where we detect a subsequent shift of emphasis or an inadequate grasp of the implications of a concept. We have even conceded the need for an appendix.

The doctrinal value of this sutta is inestimable. It not only contains fundamental tenets of Buddhism but also seems to present them with a forceful and convincing inter-relatedness which is resonant of the Buddhist idea of spiritual perfection built up of gradual and successive stages of training and is

referred to in Buddhist texts as *anupubbasikkhā*. The exposition of this sutta by the Buddha was triggered off by the discovery of a wrong interpretation given by the monk Ariṭṭha to the clear exposition made by the Buddha himself as to what should really be the true Buddhist attitude to the gratification of the senses. It should be evident from a study of the Buddhist teachings on the subject that there is no denying by the Buddha of the joy and satisfaction [*sukhaṃ somanassaṃ* - M. I. 85] which a human being derives through his reaction to pleasant and appealing [*iṭṭhā kantā manāpā*] sensory stimuli which is referred to as the enjoyment of the senses [*kāmānaṃ assādo*]. Through a relative and realistic assessment, these pleasures are shown to entail anxieties and perils as well as stresses and strains, outweighing to a greater degree the joys and comforts they provide. Viewing the concept of joy, comfort and happiness philosophically, the Buddha says that he sees no need to run away from them as long as they savour not of lustful attachment and unwholesome, defiling traits [*Na kho ahain tassa sukhasa bhāyāmi yam taṃ sukhaṃ aññatr' eva kāmehi aññatra akusalehi dhammehi* : M.I. 247].

While the pursuit of sensory pleasures, on the one hand, derives from the ill-conceived notion of 'I' and 'mine' it also contributes reciprocally to enlarging this notion of the ego. Thus we find the sutta, having commenced with the Buddhist attitude to the gratification of the senses, dealing at length on the mode of disintegrating the ego and spelling out the philosophy on which that process could be firmly established. The elimination of the notion of 'I' and 'mine' which thus results, together with the regulated and cultured attitude to the pursuit of pleasures is said to bestow upon the disciple, here and now, good mental health [*aparitassanā* : the absence of both yearning and longing on the one hand, and consequent trembling and fear on the other] and lead him to complete liberation from the painful process of journeying in *samsāra* [...*virajjati virāgā vimuccati vimuttasmiṃ vimuttamiti ñāṇaṃ hoti*. M. I.139].

It should also be pointed out in this study that our sutta deals precisely with



the manner in which the disciple should look upon the *dhamma* as the teachings in Buddhism. Dhamma is essentially the medium through which the specific Buddhist ideas come to be communicated. When for instance Aritṭha says that he understands 'the dhamma as taught by the Buddha' [*Bhagavatā dhammaṃ desitaṃ ājānāmi*. M.I.130], he refers to the specific teachings of the Buddha with regard to the gratification of sense desires. Arising out of the very incident which prompted the propounding of this sutta, there is a warning given here of the possibilities of misunderstanding the philosophical stand-point of the Buddha and of the failure to grasp in full the implications of his teachings. The accusation of the Buddha as being a nihilist on account of his *anatta* doctrine and the challenge of the Buddha's view about the seriousness of the implications of sense pleasures as recorded in this sutta are definite evidence of such situations.

Thus it is clearly established that what the Buddha taught is not necessarily in the form that others believe them to be. Accusations against the Buddha which result from such misunderstandings and misinterpretations are referred to in Buddhist texts as unjust and unfair [*Na hi sādhu bhagavato abbhakkhānaṃ. Na hi bhagavā evaṃ vadeyya*. M.I.130]. They are only products of an individual's inadequate and incorrect grasp [*attanā duggahita*] of the teaching. In our sutta, the words of Aritṭha obviously strike a discordant note, as is seen in the assertions to the contrary which the disciples make in reply to the Buddha's questioning regarding their acceptability. In the manifold teachings of Buddhism, despite its vastness, there is a thorough consistency, in that they all lead the follower to the goal of release [*ayam dhammavinayo ekaraso vimuttiraso*: A. IV.203]. All teachings are geared towards the attainment of this goal, their unmistakable characteristic being dispassion and detachment : *nibbidā* and *virāga*. In the history of the Sāsana, even at a time when a specific legal injunction had not been laid down against a Buddhist disciple's indulging in sex gratification, the fellow-disciples remonstrate with Sudinna, the first detected offender on this count, pointing out to him the spirit of the dhamma, that it is calculated to lead to dispassion and detachment [*Nanu āvuso bhagavatā*

*anekapariyāyena virāgāya dhammo desito no sarāgāya visamyogāya dhammo desito no samyogāya anupādānāya dhammo desito no saupādānāya. Vin. III.19].*

Equally interesting to observe at this stage is the Buddha's stand-point, stated elsewhere, with the regard to the *avyākata* or issues on which he has made no pronouncements. He says that he abstained from commenting on them because such knowledge does not contribute to the required dispassion and detachment [*Kasmā bhante Bhagavatā avyākatam ti? Na h' etaṃ Poṭṭhapāda atthasamhitam na nibbidāya na virāgāya na nibbānāya saṃvattati. D.I.188 f].*

The instance of precise questioning by the Buddha with regard to Ariṭṭha's misrepresentation of his position shows us that in the process of transmission from one hearer to another there could result considerable deviation from the original statement, almost to the extent of emergence of a contradictory version, as is the instance in our sutta. We have no doubt that here the Buddha was conscious of the possibility of a distortion in the hands of a listener and that he was questioning as to the source from whence Ariṭṭha came to acquire this distorted version [*Kassa kho nāma tvaṃ moghapurisa mayā evaṃ dhammaṃ desitaṃ ājānāsi. M.I.132].* In the interests of the Sāsana it was important, where possible, to bring to book such offenders, whether their misdeeds were deliberately done or resulted through complete ignorance. At M.I.258, the Buddha puts the same question to Sāti regarding the perverse view he held relating to the Buddha's explanation of the nature of consciousness [*viññāṇa*].

Thus it is clear that every attempt was made to safeguard the true import of the dhamma and prevent it from losing its sense of direction. Nevertheless, the Buddha was equally anxious to make it clear that the dhamma, in spite of its supremacy, was only a means to an end. Hence the inclusion in this sutta of the reference to the parable of the raft. The dhamma as the message of Buddhism, is compared in its totality to a raft and is said to serve the purpose of getting worldlings ferried out of *samsāra - nittharaṇatthāya*. Once the purpose was served, there was no more need to hold on to it - *no gahaṇatthāya*. This implies

the admission of the functional efficiency of the dhamma, of leading its follower to the desired goal of salvation [*Yassa ca khv' assa atthāya dhammo desito so niyyāti takkarassa sammā dukkhakkhayāyā 'ti.* M.I.68]. Even such an efficient medium, after it has served its purpose, would be of no avail. Hence it would be given up. Whatever is incapable of serving that purpose, would therefore have to be given up, all the more. This would be the down-to-earth, basic meaning of this allusion in our sutta to the giving up of dhammas as well as adhammas.

It is abundantly clear that our sutta uses the dhamma as an efficient medium for the demolition of the egoistic basis of life, viz. the notion of 'I' and 'mine'. Under the heading *Cha ditthittihānāni* or Six Bases of False Views, it brings up for discussion the acceptance of an enduring personal self or soul which is believed to be organically related to a Cosmic Self in which it finally seeks union or absorption. The ill-conceived notion of 'I' and 'mine' which, in terms of Buddhist ethics, is the most baneful and contributes ceaselessly to the ramification of the samsaric process, is ultimately pointed out to be generated through the adherence to a belief in a micro-cosmic as well as macro-cosmic Self or Soul. Buddhism holds this belief to be responsible for the emergence of damaging and destructive trends of egoism. Hence it is far from contributing to the ethical advancement of man. It leads, on the other hand, to greed and hatred, starting mildly and ending in violent forms of desire to possess and eliminate. Operating at a gross mundane level it contributes more to attachment and self-interest than to detachment and selflessness, which Buddhism regards as basic equipment for its salvation process.

Thus Buddhism's persistent demand is for the quest of the truth, the real and true nature of life [*yathābhucca* or *yathābhūta-nāṇa*]. The reducibility, in terms of Buddhist teachings, of the phenomenon of existence of man to the psycho-physical complex of the five aggregates which are mutually interacting, no more no less, and the assessing of each one of these with regard to its real nature and worth drives the Buddhist disciple to the logical position of being

reconciled to seeing their real nature of transiency [*aniccato dukkhato anattato passati*. - S.II.110 f.]. One does not thereafter grope any more in the dark, stretching out for a Reality beyond them. The search, in itself, would be fiction to the Buddhist. The real Buddhist process of release, which alone should be the primary concern of the Buddhist, begins here [See M.I.183-9].

These introductory remarks, we consider, would be adequate to impress upon the reader the need for a completely integrated study of the contents of this sutta. The sutta reflects an unmistakable singleness of purpose which imparts to its different component elements a reassuring homogeneity. Both the analyses undertaken in the sutta and the psycho-ethical lines of action prescribed, are geared towards the final release from the irksome process of life in *samsāra*. In consonance with this, the sutta winds itself up with its precise verdict on the different levels of spiritual perfection which a disciple attains on the path to salvation, leaving out clearly birth in the heavenly worlds [*sagga*] on an entirely different plane.

## Discourse on the Parable of the Snake

[5] Thus have I heard - At one time the Lord was staying in Savatthi in Jeta Grove in the monastery of Anāthapiṇḍika. Now at that time an erroneous view like this had arisen in a monk named Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer.

' In so far as I understand the doctrine [dhamma] taught by the Lord, these ways of life [*dhammā*]<sup>1</sup> which have been declared by him to be pernicious [*antarāyikā*]<sup>2</sup> are in themselves inadequate to bring about the ruin of one who indulges in them.' Several monks heard:

An erroneous view like this has arisen in the monk named Ariṭṭha, who was formerly a vulture-trainer : 'In so far as I understand the doctrine taught by the Lord, these ways of life which have been declared by him to be pernicious are in themselves inadequate to bring about the ruin of one who indulges in them.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The allusion here is to the gratification of the senses [*kāma*] and their evaluation by the Buddha. For a realistic and relative assessment of the pleasures and pain associated with *kāma*, see M.I.85 ff., 92.

<sup>2</sup> The word *antarāyika* in these contexts, as related to the religious life of the Buddhist disciple, means 'stands in the way of, damaging to, brings about the ruin of.' Certain ways of life, such as indulgence in the gratification of the senses as discussed in this sutta as well as traits of character which thwart the path of spiritual progress are high-lighted in Buddhist texts. The Samyutta Nikāya focuses attention on gains, favors and eulogies in this same spirit [*Bhagavā etadavoca. Dāruṇo bhikkhave lābhasakkārasiloko kaṭuko pharuso antarāyiko anuttarassa yogakkhemassa adhigamāya. S.II.226*].

<sup>3</sup> MLS. translates this as : "In so far as I understand dhamma taught by the Lord it is that in following these things called stumbling-blocks by the Lord, there is no stumbling-block at all." [MLS.I.167].

The Wheel. p.I. "There are things called 'obstructions' by the Blessed One. As I understand His teaching, those things are not necessarily obstructive for one who pursues them."

FDB.I.90. "...the states of mind declared by the Lord to be stumbling-blocks are not such at all to him who indulges in them".

Then these monks approached the monk Ariṭṭha, who had formerly been a vulturetrainer. Having approached him, they spoke thus to the monk Ariṭṭha, who had formerly been a vulture-trainer: Is it true, as is said, reverend Ariṭṭha, that an erroneous view has arisen in you, like this .. 'In so far as I understand the doctrine, these ways of life which have been declared by him to be pernicious, are in themselves inadequate to bring about the ruin of one who indulges in them.'

'Undoubtedly, your reverences, as I understand the doctrine taught by the Lord, these ways of life which have been declared by him to be pernicious are in themselves inadequate to bring about the ruin of one who indulges in them.'

Then these monks, anxious to dissuade the monk Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer from that erroneous view, questioned him, cross-questioned him, and pressed for the reasons and said : 'Do not speak thus reverend Ariṭṭha, do not misrepresent the Lord, misrepresentation of the Lord is not at all seemly, and the Lord, certainly would not speak thus. For in diverse forms, reverend Ariṭṭha, are pernicious ways of life, declared to be so by the Lord, and they are in themselves certainly adequate to bring about the ruin of the one who indulges.'

[6] in them. Sense pleasures are said by the Lord to be of little satisfaction, of much pain, of much tribulation, wherein the evil consequences that follow outweigh the pleasures. Sense pleasures are likened by the Lord to a lump of meat, to a torch of dry grass, to a pit of glowing embers, to a dream, to something borrowed, to the fruits of a tree, ... to a slaughter house, to an impaling stake. Sense pleasures are likened by the Lord to a snake's head, of much pain, of much tribulation, wherein the evil consequences that follow outweigh the pleasures.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> MLS.I.168 : .... ' wherein is more peril.'

The Wheel. p. 2. ' The perils in them are greater.'

Yet, the monk who had formerly been a vulture-trainer, even while being questioned, cross-questioned and pressed for his reasons by these monks, expressed that erroneous view as before, obstinately holding and adhering to it : " Undoubtedly, your reverences, in so far as I understand the doctrine taught by the Lord, these ways of life which have been declared by him to be pernicious are in themselves inadequate to bring about the ruin of the one who indulges in them."

Since these monks were unable to dissuade the monk Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer from that erroneous view, then these monks approached the Lord. Having approached him, and greeted him, they sat down at a respectful distance. While they were seated at a respectful distance, these monks spoke thus to the Lord :

" Lord, an erroneous view like this arose in the monk called Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer : 'In so far as I understand the doctrine taught by the Lord, these ways of life which have been declared by him to be pernicious are in themselves inadequate to bring about the ruin of the one who indulges in them ". And we heard, Lord, that an erroneous view like this had arisen in the monk called Ariṭṭha, who had formerly been a vulture-trainer : " In so far as I understand the doctrine taught by the Lord, these ways of life which have been declared by him to be pernicious acts in themselves inadequate to bring about the ruin of the one who indulges in them ". Then we, Lord, approached the monk Ariṭṭha, who had formerly been a vulture-trainer. Having approached him, we spoke thus to the monk Ariṭṭha, who had formerly been a vulture-trainer : " Is it true, as is said, reverend Ariṭṭha, that an erroneous view like this has arisen in you. " In so far as I understand the doctrine taught by the Lord, these ways of life which have been declared by him to be pernicious, are in themselves inadequate to bring about the ruin of the one who indulges in them.'

When this had been said, Lord, the monk Ariṭṭha, who had formerly been a vulture-trainer, spoke thus to us : ' Undoubtedly as I, your reverences, understand the doctrine taught by the Lord, these ways of life which have been declared by him to be pernicious, are in themselves inadequate to bring about the ruin of the one who indulges in them.' Then we, Lord, anxious to dissuade the monk Ariṭṭha, who had formerly been a vulture-trainer, from that pernicious view, questioned him, cross-questioned him, pressed him for reasons, and said: " Do not misrepresent the Lord. Misrepresentation of the Lord is not at all seemly, and the Lord certainly would not speak thus. For in diverse forms, reverend Ariṭṭha, are pernicious ways of life declared to be so. Sense-pleasures are likened by the Lord to a skeleton.... sense-pleasures are likened by the Lord to a snake's head, of much pain wherein the evil

[7] consequences that follow outweigh the pleasures." Yet, Lord, the monk Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer, even while being questioned, cross-questioned and pressed for his reasons by us, expressed that erroneous view as before, obstinately holding and adhering to it: 'Undoubtedly, as I, your reverences, understand the doctrine taught by the Lord, these ways of life which have been declared by him to be pernicious are in themselves inadequate to bring about the ruin of the one who indulges in them.' Since we, Lord, were unable to dissuade the monk Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer from that erroneous view, we are, therefore, telling this matter to the Lord."

Then the Lord addressed a certain monk, saying, "Come you monk, summon the monk Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer in my name, saying The Lord is summoning you, Ariṭṭha."

"Very well, Lord ", and this monk, having answered the Lord in assent, approached the monk Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer, and having approached him, spoke thus to the monk Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer : " The Lord is summoning you, reverend Ariṭṭha."



Very well, your reverence ", and the monk Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulturetrainer, having answered this monk in assent, approached the Lord. Having approached him, and having greeted him, he sat down at a respectful distance. As the monk Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer was seated at a respectful distance, the Lord spoke thus to him.

" Is it true as is said, that in you, Ariṭṭha, an erroneous view like this arose : 'In so far as I understand the doctrine taught by the Lord, these ways of life which have been declared by him to be pernicious are in themselves inadequate to bring about the ruin of the one who indulges in them."

"Undoubtedly, Lord, as I understand the doctrine taught by the Lord, these ways of life which have been declared by him to be pernicious are in themselves inadequate to bring about the ruin of the one who indulges in them."

"Through whom then, foolish man, do you come to understand that I have taught the doctrine in this manner? <sup>5</sup> Have not the pernicious ways of life been declared to be so by me in diverse ways and been stated to be in themselves certainly adequate to bring about the ruin of the one who indulges in them? Sense-pleasures are said by me, to be of little satisfaction, of much pain, of much

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<sup>5</sup> MLS.I.170 following the Commentary [MA.II.104], translates this as ' To whom then do you, foolish man, understand that dhamma was taught thus by me? 'We prefer to take this question by the Buddha as being calculated to determine the source of the misinterpretation, the person from whom Ariṭṭha gathered the distorted version. The Commentarial version looks for the person to whom such a perverse doctrine was preached by the Buddha. This assumption is totally unwarranted even if the question were conceded to be merely a rhetorical one. It is, in fact, incriminating! *Kissa* in the context is more fittingly taken as the genitive case, and not the dative case, denoting the source of hearing or knowing as in *aññassa samaṇassa vā brāhmaṇiassa vā sutvā vadāmi* [M.III.186]. The Chinese rendering of this as ' You from whose mouth hear': **Ju ts'ung ho k'ou wen** brings out the original meaning even more emphatically [Taisho p.763 C.]. The Wheel p.3.... 'Of whom do you know, foolish man, that I have taught him the teaching in that manner?'

FDB.I. 911. ' To whom, foolish man, do you aver that I ever so taught the Doctrine?'

tribulation, wherein the evil consequences that follow outweigh the pleasures. Sense-pleasures are likened by me to a skeleton, to a lump of meat, to a torch of dry grass, to a pit of glowing embers, to a dream, to something borrowed, to the fruits of a tree, to a slaughter-house, to an impaling stake... Sense-pleasures are likened by me to a

[8] snake's head, of much pain, of much tribulation, wherein the evil consequences that follow outweigh the pleasures. And yet you, foolish man, not only misrepresent me because of your own wrong grasp, but also injure yourself and give rise to much demerit, which will be for a long time, foolish man, for your woe and sorrow."

Then the Lord addressed the monks, saying: " What do you think about this, monks? Has the monk Ariṭṭha, who was formerly a vulture-trainer, got even a basic insight into and an initiation in this religious dispensation? " <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Usmīkato ' pi imasmiṃ dhammavinaye. Note the Commentarial explanation of this statement Kin nu kho evaṃ imassa appamattikā 'pi ñāṇusmā atthi yaṃ nissāya vāyamanto maggaphalāni nibbatteyyā ' ti? [MA.II.104].

MLS.I.170 translates this as 'has the monk Ariṭṭha ...even a glimmering of this dhamma and discipline?'

The Wheel p.3. has ' ...produced any spark ( of understanding ) in this teaching and discipline? ' FDB.1.92 ' has got even a spark of illumination in this Doctrine and Rules? '

Dhammavinaya as a compound-word is used in Pali texts to mean the religious life, particularly of the monk, in terms of the Buddhist teachings [M.I.67; II.182]. It is the system as well as the process of embodying the essence of the religion in one's life. Therefore the non-acceptance and the non-grasp of the basic teachings completely alienates one from the religious life. It is thus interesting to note that both in this sutta and in the Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhaya Sutta. [M.I.253], the failure to grasp two of the fundamental Buddhist concepts, viz. the Buddhist attitude to sense pleasures and the true conditioned nature of consciousness [viññāṇa] are given as adequate reason for the total alienation of a disciple from the religious fold. An equally interesting reference occurs at S.IV.44 where the failure, to grasp the Buddhist arguments against the idea of an atta or what belongs to an atta, i.e., attaniya in relation to the six spheres of sensory perception alienates a disciple from the fold of the religion [avusitam tena brahmacariyam ārakā so imasmā

"How could this be, Lord? It is not so, Lord." When this had been said, the monk Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer sat down silent, ashamed, his shoulders drooped, his head lowered, brooding, speechless. Then the Lord, understanding why the monk Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer was silent, ashamed, his shoulders drooped, his head lowered, brooding, speechless, spoke thus to the monk Ariṭṭha who had formerly been a vulture-trainer.

You, foolish man, will be known through this erroneous view of your own. I will now interrogate the monks. Then the Lord addressed the monks, saying:

" Do you, too, monks understand the doctrine taught by me in this manner as does the monk Ariṭṭha, who had formerly been a vulture-trainer, who is thereby not only misrepresenting me through his own wrong grasp, but is also bringing about his own ruin, giving rise to much demerit? "

"No, Lord. For, Lord, in diverse forms are pernicious ways of life declared to be so, to us by the Lord, and stated to be in themselves certainly capable of bringing about the ruin of the one who indulges in them. Sense-pleasures are said by the Lord to be of little satisfaction, of much pain, of much tribulation wherein the evil consequences that follow outweigh the pleasures. Sense-pleasures are likened by the Lord to a skeleton. Sense-pleasures are likened by the Lord to a snake's head, of much pain, of much tribulation wherein the evil consequences that follow outweigh the pleasures."

"It is good, monks, it is good that you, monks, have thus understood the doctrine taught by me. For in diverse forms have the pernicious ways of life been

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dhammavinayā 'ti]. In other words, such a disciple lacks what truly constitutes religiousness in the Buddhist sense.

On the other hand, note the positive concept of this recorded in the Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta as āgato imaṃ saddhamman ' ti [M.I.47f.] = entered or come into this saddhamma or true doctrine'. In non-Buddhist circles too, the term dhammavinaya has been used to refer to their own systems of religious living [M.II.3, 243].

declared to be so. Sense pleasures are said by me to be of little satisfaction, of much pain, of much tribulation, wherein the evil consequences that follow outweigh the pleasures. Sense-pleasures are likened by me

[9] to a skeleton . . . Sense pleasures are likened by me to a snake's head, of much pain, of much tribulation, wherein the evil consequences that follow outweigh the pleasures. But this monk Ariṭṭha, who had formerly been a vulture-trainer, by his wrong grasp of the teaching not only misrepresents me but also brings about his own ruin, and gives rise to much demerit. This will be for a long time for the woe and sorrow of this foolish man. Indeed, monks, this situation does not occur that one could pursue sense-pleasures apart from sense-pleasures themselves, and without sensitivity to sense-pleasures and without thoughts of sense-pleasures.

In this religious order of mine, monks, some foolish men master the dhamma (consisting of the following literary divisions) : the Discourses in prose, in prose and verse, the Expositions, the Verses, the Uplifting verses, the 'As it was said', the Birth stories, the Wonders, the Miscellanies. These foolish men having mastered that Dhamma, do not test the meaning of the different divisions of the dhamma by intuitive wisdom; and these divisions of the dhamma whose meaning is untested by intuitive wisdom do not become clear ; these foolish men master this dhamma simply for the advantage of reproaching others, and for the advantage of acquitting themselves of charges brought against them,<sup>7</sup> and they do not arrive at the goal for the sake of which they mastered the dhamma. These different divisions of the dhamma, badly grasped by them conduce for a long time to their woe and sorrow. What is the reason for this? Monks, it is because of a wrong grasp of the dhamma (consisting of these different divisions. Hence the use of the plural of the term dhamma: dhammānam). Monks, it is like a man walking about aiming after a snake, looking about for a snake. He might see a

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<sup>7</sup> MLS. I.171 '... for the advantage of gossiping.' The Wheel p.5 '... for refuting others in dispensation.' FDB I.93. '... for bandying verbal quotations.'

large snake, and he might take hold of it by a coil or by its tail; the snake, having coiled round him, might bite him on his hand or arm, or on another part of his body; from this cause, he might, come to dying or to pain like unto dying. What is the reason for this? Monks, it is because of his wrong grasp of the snake. Even so, monks, do some foolish men, here master the dhamma: the Discourses in prose . . . monks it is because of the wrong grasp of the dhamma consisting of these different divisions.<sup>8</sup>

In this case, monks, some young men of family master the dhamma (consisting of the following literary divisions) : the Discourses in prose, in prose and verse, the Expositions, the Verses, . . . the Miscellanies. These men having mastered that dhamma, test the meaning of the different divisions of the dhamma by intuitive wisdom; and these divisions of the dhamma whose meaning is tested by intuitive wisdom, become clear to them. These men master the dhamma neither for the advantage of reproaching others, nor for the advantage of acquitting themselves of charges brought against, and they arrive at the goal for the sake of which they mastered the dhamma. These different divisions of the dhamma being well grasped by them, conduce for a long time to their welfare and happiness. What is the reason for this? It is monks, because of a right grasp of the dhamma. Monks, it is like a man walking about aiming after a snake, searching for a snake, looking about for a snake. He might see a large snake, and he might hold it back skillfully with a forked stick ; having held it back skillfully with a forked stick, he might grasp it properly by the neck. However that snake, monks, might wind its coil round that man's hand or arm or round another part of his body, but he

[10] would not come to dying or to pain like unto dying. What is the reason for this? Monks, it is because of his right grasp of the snake. Even so, monks, some

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<sup>8</sup> MLS. I.172 '...a wrong grasp of things.' The Wheel p.5. 'Because of their wrong grasp of the teachings.' FDB. I. 93. 'Because they have grasped it (these diverse aspects of the Doctrine) all wrong.'

young men of family master the dhamma... It is, monks, because of a right grasp of the dhamma. Therefore, monks, of whatever I have said you comprehend the meaning, then retain it in that form.<sup>9</sup> Of whatever I have said, you do not comprehend the meaning, then I should be questioned about it by you, or else those who are distinguished monks.

Monks, I will teach you the dhamma which is comparable to a raft,<sup>10</sup> for the purpose of crossing over, and not for retaining. Listen to it, pay careful attention, and I will speak." "Yes, Lord", these monks answered the Lord in assent.

The Lord said thus - "Monks, as a man going along a highway might see a great stretch of water, the hither bank dangerous and frightening, the further bank secure, not frightening, and there would be no boat for crossing by or a bridge across for going from the not beyond to the beyond, then this might occur to him : " This is a great stretch of water, the hither bank dangerous and frightening, the further bank secure and not frightening and there is no boat for crossing by or a bridge across for going from the beyond to the not beyond. Suppose that I, having collected grass, sticks, branches and foliage, and having

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<sup>9</sup> MLS. I.172 "Wherefore, monks, understand the meaning of what I have said, then learn it."

The Wheel. p. 6. "Therefore, O Monks, if you know the purpose of what I have said, you should keep it in mind accordingly."

FDB. I.94. "Therefore, Almsmen, when you understand the import of what I say, so treasure it up in your memories."

<sup>10</sup> MLS. I. 173. "Monks I will teach you dhamma - the Parable of the Raft".

The Wheel. p. 7 "I shall show you, monks the Teaching's similitude to a raft ..."

FDRI,94, "By the parable of the raft I will teach how to abandon and not to retain."

MLS. translation "the Parable of the Raft" gives the impression that what is referred to is a special discourse by that name. But it is clear from the sutta that it is a reference to the general nature of the dhamma, that it is only a means to an end. The Chinese text [Taisho p. 764 B] in fact, renders it as " for a long time [chang yeh = dīgharattam] I have taught the doctrine comparable to a raft. On the other hand, since the major burden of the raft simile is that once made use of it is to be given up, the Chinese repeat this idea "for the purpose of giving up [Yu ling chi she] even where the Pali has "for the purpose of crossing over - *nittharanatthāya*.

tied a raft, depending on that raft, and striving with hands and feet, should cross over safely to the beyond? " Then, monks, that man, having collected grass, sticks, branches and foliage, having tied a raft, depending on that raft, and striving with his hands and feet, might cross over safely to the beyond. To him, crossed over, gone beyond, this might occur: "Now this raft has been very useful to me. I depending on this raft, and striving with my hands and feet, crossed over safely to the beyond. Suppose now that I, having put this raft on my head, or having lifted it on to my shoulder, should proceed as I desire? What do you think about this, monks? If that man does this, is he being meaningful in his behavior towards that raft?

"No Lord."

"What should that man do, monks, in order to be meaningful in his behavior towards that raft? In this case, monks, it might occur to that man who has crossed over, gone beyond: "Now, this raft has been very useful to me. Depending on this raft and striving with my hands and feet, I have crossed over safely to the beyond. Suppose, now that I, having beached this

[11] raft on dry ground or having floated it in the water,<sup>11</sup> should proceed as I desire? In doing this, monks, that man would be meaningful in his behavior towards that raft. Even so, monks, is the dhamma taught by me, comparable to a raft, for crossing over and not for retaining. You monks, by understanding the doctrine to be comparable to a raft should ultimately relinquish even the *dhammas* [i.e. religious teachings which prove to be efficient media of salvation], let alone the *adhammas* [inefficient ones].<sup>12</sup> Monks, there are these six bases of

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<sup>11</sup> MLS. I.173 "... having submerged it under the water." The Wheel p.8 " let it float in the water." FDB. I. 95 " Leave it afloat ".

<sup>12</sup> MLS. I. 173-4 "You monks, by understanding the Parable of the Raft, should get rid even of [right] mental objects, all the more of wrong ones."

The Wheel. P. 7 "You O monks, who understand the Teaching's similitude to a raft, you should let go even [good] teachings, how much more false ones..."

false views<sup>13</sup> [with regard to what is believed to be self and what is believed to

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FDB. I.95 "If you understand this parable of the raft, you have to discard good things, and *a fortiori* bad things".

There is every reason to believe that even the Vajracchedikā Prajñā Pāramitā [S.O.R. XIII. Edward Conze p. 32] which ascribes a similar statement to the Buddha [*Na khalu punah subhūte bodhisattvena mahāsattvena dharma udgrahitavyo na adharmah. Tasmād iyam Tathāgatena sandhāya vāg bhāsiā kolopamaṃ dharmaparyāyaṃ ājānadbhir dharma eva prahātavyah prāgeva adharmā iti*] takes *dharma* here in the sense of 'medium of salvation'. Abhidharmakosavyākhyā 1.22 quoting this statement says *iti mārgasatyasya api nihsaraṇam kalpatā eveti* [Conze. loc.cit. n. 1].

The Vajracchedikā itself is averse to such a dharma-consciousness [*dharmasamjñā* or *adharmasamjñā*] because it leads to an *ātmagrāha*, a grasp of a self-hood, an idea very much criticized in the major theme of the Alagaddūpama. [Conze. op.cit.p.31. *Sacet subhūte tesāṃ bodhisattvānāṃ mahāsattvānāṃ dharma-samjñā pravarteta sa eva tesāṃ ātmagrāho bhavet.*

<sup>13</sup> MLS.I.174 "...these six views with causal relations."

The Wheel, p. 8 "... these six grounds for false views."

FDB. I. 95. " Speculative tenets are six fold."

The six bases of false views [*diṭṭhiṭṭhānāni*] enumerated here are of interest to the Buddhist disciple in that they pin-point all instances of individuation [*eso ahaṃ asmī*] and consequent egoistic appropriation [*etaṃ mama* etc.] which bring in their wake a wide range of pathological states of mind as being traceable, on the one hand, to an uninitiated worldling's attitude to his self or personality. Our sutta examines this in detail in terms of the five aggregates into which a being is finally analyzable. On the other hand, it is also pointed out that an inherited and accepted belief with regard to the identity of an individual self with a cosmic self [in which the former is said to finally merge itself after death for eternal survival] could give rise to these two pernicious speculations of "I" and "mine" [*ahaṃkā ramamiṃkāramānānusayā*]. This tendency to lean on an individual self as well as a cosmic self is basically the bane of man against which a Buddhist disciple has to battle up to the attainment of his final salvation in arahantship [*...sabba-ahaṃkāra-mamiṃkāra-mānānusayānaṃ khayā virāgā nirodhā cāgā paṭinissaggā anupādā vimutto ' ti vadāmi.* M.I.486. See also S.II.252, A.I.132]. The commentary [MA.II.110] correctly observes here that whatever is a false view and whatever is a basis of false view [*diṭṭhiyā paccayo*] and whatever prompts a false view [*diṭṭhiyā ārammaṇā*] are all parts of the complex known as *diṭṭhiṭṭhāna* or basis of false view.

MLS. apparently missed this Commentarial point. Note the following observation at MLS. I.174. n.

3. *diṭṭhiṭṭhānāni*: cf. A.V.198. MA.II.110 says "There is view and the *ṭhānā* of view ; both the



belong to this self, both internal and external]. What are the six? In this connection, monks, an uninstructed average person, taking no account of the pure ones, unskilled in the dhamma of the pure ones, untrained in the dhamma of the pure ones, taking no count of the true men, unskilled in the dhamma of the true men, untrained in the dhamma of the true men, regards material shape as: This is mine, this am I, this is my self; he regards feeling as "This is mine; he regards perception as

[12] This is mine..."; he regards the habitual tendencies as . "These are mine...".<sup>14</sup> And also he regards whatever is seen, heard, sensed, perceived, reached, looked for, pondered by the mind as: "This is mine, this am I, this is my self." Also whatever basis of false views says : "This the world, this the self, after dying I will become permanent, lasting, eternal, not liable to change, I will stand just like unto the eternal," he regards this as This is mine, this am I, this is my self."

But monks, an instructed disciple of the pure ones, taking count of the pure ones, skilled in the dhamma of the pure ones, well trained in the dhamma of the pure ones, taking count of the true men, skilled in the dhamma of the true men, well trained in the dhamma of the true men, regards material shape as : " This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my self ; he regards feeling as " This is not

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cause of view and the result of view."

This is not a correct translation of *Tattha diṭṭhiṭṭhānānī ti diṭṭhi pi diṭṭhiṭṭhānaṃ diṭṭhiyā ārammanam pi diṭṭhiṭṭhānaṃ diṭṭhiyā paccayo pi*. [MA. II.110]. It seems to mean : 'In this context, **diṭṭhiṭṭhāna** or **basis of diṭṭhi** means view [*diṭṭhi pi*]. It also means prompting [*ārammana*] of view. *diṭṭhiṭṭhāna* also means the basic cause or condition of view.'

<sup>14</sup> Repeating the pattern followed for *rūpa* [material form] etc. MLS.I.174 and 175 add here "he regards consciousness..." as with reference to *viññāṇa*. But the Pali equivalent of this does not appear in any text. See P.T.S. M.I.135 and 136 ; BJTS [Sinhala]M.I.338 and 340 ; Nyānavimala (Sinhala) M.I.148 and 149. This omission of *viññāṇa* here in the regular listing, providing in its place what looks a total definition of it, is apparently noted and hinted at in the commentarial note *Desanāvīlāsena h' ettha diṭṭhādīārammanavasena viññāṇam dassitaṃ*. MA.II.110.

mine, .. "; he regards perception as " This is not mine..." ; he regards the habitual tendencies as " These are not mine." And also he regards whatever is seen, heard, sensed, cognised, reached, looked for, pondered by the mind as " This is not mine, this am I not, this not myself." Also whatever basis of false views [*ditthiṭṭhānān*] says "This the world, this the self, after dying I will become permanent, lasting, eternal, not liable to change. I will stand fast like unto the eternal." He regards this as "This is not mine, this am I not, this is not myself." He regarding thus that which does not exist, will not be anxious.

When this had been said, a certain monk spoke thus to the Lord: "But Lord, might there be<sup>15</sup> anxiety about something objective that does not exist ."

"There might be, monk, " the Lord said." In this case, monk, it occurs to somebody 'What was certainly mine is not mine (now); what might certainly be mine, there is certainly no chance of my getting.' He grieves, mourns, laments, beats his breasts, and falls into utter confusion?<sup>16</sup> Even so, monks, does there come to be anxiety about something objective that does not exist."

" But might there be, Lord, no anxiety about something objective that does not exist?"

" There might be monk ", said the Lord. "In this case, monk, it does not occur to anybody : 'What was certainly mine is certainly not mine (now) ; what might certainly be mine, there is certainly no chance of my getting'. He does not grieve, mourn, lament, he does not beat his breast, he does not fall into utter confusion. Even so, monk, does there come to be no anxiety about something objective that does not exist."

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<sup>15</sup> MLS.I.175 "... might there not be anxiety [inclusion of *not* here is obviously a printer's error].

<sup>16</sup> MLS.I.175 " ...falls into disillusionment."

The Wheel. p. 9 "... and dejection befalls him."

FDB. I. 96 "... nor is he distraught."

"But, Lord, might there be anxiety about something subjective that does not exist?"

[13] " There might be, monk," the Lord said. " In this case, monk, the view occurs to someone : 'This the world, this the self, after dying I will become permanent, lasting, eternal, not liable to change, I will stand fast like unto the eternal.' He hears the dhamma as it is taught by the Tathāgata or by a disciple of the Tathāgata for rooting out all resolve for bias, tendency and addiction to bases of false views, for tranquilizing all the activities, for casting away all attachment, for the destruction of craving, for dispassion, cessation, *nibbāna*. It occurs to him thus: ' I will surely be annihilated, I will surely be destroyed, I will surely not be'. He grieves, mourns, laments, beats his breasts, and falls into utter confusion. Thus, monks, there comes to be anxiety about something subjective that does not exist."

"But, Lord, might there be no anxiety about something subjective that does not exist?"

"There might be, monk," the Lord said. "In this case, monk, the view does not occur to anyone : 'This the world, this the self, after dying I will become permanent, lasting, eternal not liable to change. I will stand fast like unto the eternal.' He hears the dhamma as it is being taught by the Tathāgata or by a disciple of the Tathāgata, rooting out all resolve for bias, tendency and addiction to bases of false views, for tranquilizing all the activities, for casting away all attachment, for the destruction of carving, for dispassion, cessation, *nibbāna*. But it does not occur to him thus, 'I will surely be annihilated, I will surely be destroyed, I will surely not be.' So he does not grieve, mourn, lament, he does not beat his breast, he does not fall into utter confusion. Thus, monk, does there come to be no anxiety about subjective that does not exist."

"Monks, you may take hold of such a possession, the possession of which would be permanent, lasting, eternal, not liable to change, that would stand fast

like unto the eternal? But do you, monks, see that possession the possession of which would be permanent, lasting, eternal. not liable to change, that would stand fast like unto the eternal?<sup>17</sup>

"No Lord?"

"Good, monks. Neither do I, monks, see that possession the possession of which is permanent, lasting, eternal, not liable to change, that would stand fast like unto the eternal. You may, monks, grasp that grasping of the theory of self, if by grasping that theory of self there would not arise grief, suffering, anguish, lamentation, despair? But do you, monks see that grasping of the theory of self, from the grasping of which theory of self there would not arise grief, suffering, anguish, lamentation, despair?"<sup>18</sup>

[14] " No Lord."

" Good, monks. Neither do I, monks, see the grasping of the theory of self from the grasping of which there would not arise grief, suffering, anguish, lamentation, despair. You may, monks, depend on that dependence on view, depending on which dependence on view there would not arise grief, suffering,

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<sup>17</sup> MLS.I.176. "Monks, could you take hold of some possession, the possession of which would be permanent...?"

The Wheel p.11. "You may well take hold of a possession, O monks, that is permanent..."

FDB I.96. "You would like to possess something that was eternal."

<sup>18</sup> MLS.I.176. "Could you, monks, grasp that grasping of the theory of self, so that by grasping that theory of self there would not arise grief ...?"

The Wheel p.11. " You may well accept monks, the assumption of self-theory from the acceptance of which there would not arise sorrow ..."

FDB. I.97. "You would like to have a grip on personal immortality such that thereby you would escape all grief, lamentation ...."

The simple use of the potential [optative] in *Taṃ bhikkhave pariggahaṃ pariggayheyyātha....etc.* does not imply an interrogation [MLS.]. Contrast *Api nu so puriso imasmiṃ ākāse rūpaṃ likheyya rūpapātubhāvaṃ kareyya*. M.I.127.

anguish, lamentation, despair? But do you, monks, see that dependence on view despair?

" No Lord."

" Good, monks. Neither do I, monks, see that dependence on view by depending on which dependence on view there would not arise grief, suffering, anguish, lamentation, despair".

" If, monks, there was the concept of a self, then there would be the concept this belongs to my self."

" Yes Lord."

" If, monks, there was the concept of what belongs to the self, then there would be the concept ' this is my self'.<sup>19</sup>

" Yes Lord."

" But if a self, monks, and what belongs to a self, well and truly do not exist, is not the viewpoint that : I This the world, this the self, after dying I will become permanent, lasting, eternal, not liable to change, I will stand fast like unto the eternal' - is not this, monks, an utterly stupid assumption?" <sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> MLS.I.177. "If, monks, there were Self, could it be said : 'It belongs to myself?' "Yes, Lord." "Or, monks, if there were what belongs to Self, could it be said : 'It is myself?', "Yes, Lord." The Wheel. p.12. "If there were a self, monks, would there be myself's property?" "So it is, Lord." "Or if there is a self's property, would there be by my self?" "So, it is, Lord."

FDB.I.97. "If there were a Self, would there be something of the nature of a 'Self of mine'?" And if there were something of the nature of a Self of mine, would there be a 'my-self'?

<sup>20</sup> MLS.I.177. "But if Self, monks, and what belongs to Self, although actually existing, are incomprehensible, is not the view and the causal relation that : 'This the world this the self.--is not this, monks, absolute complete folly?' The Wheel. p. 12. "Since in truth and, in fact, self and self's property do not obtain, O monks, then this ground for views : 'The Universe is the Self....' is it not, monks, an entirely and perfectly foolish idea?"

" Lord, how could it not be an utterly stupid assumption?"

"What do you think about this, monks? Is material shape permanent or Impermanent?"

"Impermanent, Lord."

"But is what is impermanent, painful or pleasant?"

"Painful, Lord."

[15] "But is it fitting to regard that which is impermanent, painful, liable to change, as 'This is mine, this am I, this is my self?'"

"No, Lord."

"Wherefore, monks, whatever is material shape, past, future, present, subjective or objective, gross or subtle, mean or excellent, whether it is far or near - all material shape should be seen thus by perfect intuitive wisdom as it really is : 'This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my self'. Whatever is feeling, whatever is perception, whatever are the habitual tendencies, whatever is consciousness, past, future, present, subjective or objective, gross or subtle, mean or excellent, whether is far or near - all consciousness should be seen thus by perfect intuitive wisdom as it really is: 'This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my self'"

Monks the instructed disciple of the pure ones, seeing thus, delights not in material shape, delights not in feeling, delights not in perception, delights not in

FDB. I.97. 'But, if really and truly there is to be found neither Self nor anything of the nature of Self, is it not mere absolute folly to hold the speculative view that the world around me is 'the Self', unto which I shall pass hereafter, -eternal and permanent.'

\*\* Note - Nothing is further from the truth than this MLS. rendering "But if Self... although actually existing, are incomprehensible..."

This transfers Buddhism, philosophically, to an entirely different camp.

the habitual tendencies, delights not in consciousness; delighting not in [them], he is dispassionate; through dispassion he is freed; in freedom the knowledge comes to be that he is freed, and he comprehends: ' Destroyed is birth, brought to a close is the perfection of the higher-life, done is what was to be done, there is no more for a further state like this'.

Monks, such a monk is said to have lifted the barrier, and he is said to have filled the moat, and he is said to have pulled up the pillar, and he is said to have withdrawn the bolts, and he is said to be a pure one, the flag laid low, the burden dropped, without fetters.

And how, monks, has a monk lifted the barrier? In this connection, monks, ignorance is got rid of by the monk, cut down to the roots, made like a palm-tree stump, made so that it can come to no future existence, not liable to rise again. In this way, monks, a monk comes to be one who has lifted the barrier.

And how, monks, does a monk come to be one who has filled the moat? In this connection, monks, again becoming, faring on in births, comes to be got rid of by a monk. cut down to the roots, made like a palm-tree stump, made so that they can come to no future existence, not liable to rise again. In this way, monks, a monk comes to be one who has filled the moat.

And how, monks, does a monk come to be one who has pulled up the pillar? In this connection, monks, craving comes to be got rid of by a monk made so that it can come to no future existence, not liable to rise again. In this way monks, is a monk one who has pulled up the pillar.

And how, monks, does a monk come to be one who has withdrawn the bolts? In this connection, monks, the five fetters binding to the lower (state) come to be got rid of by a monk, cut down to the roots, made like a palm-tree stump, made so that they can come to no future existence, not liable to rise again. In this way, monks, does a monk come to be one who has withdrawn the bolts.

And how, monks, does a monk come to be a pure one, the flag laid low, the burden dropped, without fetters? In this connection, monks, the conceit 'I am' comes to be got rid of by the monk, cut down to the roots, made like a palm-tree stump, made so that it can come to no future existence, not liable to rise again. In this way, monks, a monk comes to be a pure one, the flag laid low, the burden dropped, without fetters.

Monks, pursuing the monk whose mind is thus freed [*vimuttacittaṃ bhikkhuṃ*], the devas those with Indra, those with Brahma, those with Pajāpati, do not succeed in discovering the consciousness of the Tathāgata to be attached to this or that. What is the reason for this? I, monks, declare that a Tathāgata is untraceable even here and now.<sup>21</sup>

Although I, monks, am one who speaks thus, who points out thus, there are

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<sup>21</sup> MLS.I.179. "Monks, when a monk's mind is freed thus, the devas those with Indra, those with Brahma, those with Pajāpati, do not succeed in their search if they think ' This is the discriminative consciousness attached to a Tathāgata.' What is the reason for this? I, monks, say here and now that a Tathāgata is untraceable."

The Wheel. p.15. "When a monk's mind is thus freed, O monks, neither the gods with Indra .... when searching will find on what the consciousness of one thus gone [*tathāgata*] is based. Why is that? One who has thus gone is no longer traceable here and now, so I say."

FDB I.98. "When his heart is thus Delivered, not Indra.... with all their trains of gods, can succeed in tracking down aught on which depends a truth-finders' consciousness."

About the complete cessation of *viññāṇa* or consciousness in final liberation, note the following statement of Kevaḍḍha Sutta

*Ettha nāmañca rūpañ ca asesam uparujjhati*

*Viññāṇassa nirodhena etth' etaṃ uparujjhati.* D.I. 223.

This may aptly be described as the total deconditioning of *viññāṇa*. A de-conditioned *viññāṇa*, i.e. a *viññāṇa* without any attachment [*nissaya* or *patiṭṭhā*] is bereft of rebirth potential. Such a *viññāṇa* does not tie itself up with a *nāmarūpa* in a new birth for the perpetuation of the samsaric process : *ettāvataṃ vaṭṭaṃ vaṭṭati itthattaṃ paññāpanāya yadidaṃ nāmarūpaṃ saha viññāṇena* [D.II. 63f].

In this process, *viññāṇa* reaches the very end of itself, *viññāṇassa nirodha* referred to in the Kevaḍḍha Sutta.



some recluses and brahmins who misrepresent me untruly, vainly, falsely, not in accordance with fact, saying " The recluse Gotama is a nihilist, he declares the cutting off, the destruction, the disappearance of the existent being [*sato sattassa*]." <sup>22</sup> But as this, monks, is just what I am not, as this is just what I do not say, therefore these worthy recluses and brahmins, misrepresent me untruly, vainly, falsely, and not in accordance with fact when they say " The recluse Gotama is a nihilist, he declares the cutting off, the destruction, the disappearance of the existent being." Formerly, monks, as well as now, I lay down simply anguish [*dukkha*] and the stopping of anguish. If, in regard to this, monks, others revile, abuse, annoy the Tathāgata, there is in the Tathāgata no resentment, no distress, no dissatisfaction of mind concerning that.

If, in regard to this, monks, others revere, esteem, respect and honour the Tathāgata, there is in the Tathāgata, no joy, no gladness, no elation of mind concerning that. If, in regard to this, monks, others revere, esteem and honour the Tathāgata, it occurs to the Tathāgata monks, in this situation: This whose

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<sup>22</sup> This position in which the Buddha is found accused of being a nihilist is the result of the Buddha's rejection of the concept of an abiding and enduring [*nicco dhuvō*] self or soul in man which persists through samsāra unchanged. In the explanation of the phenomenon of life, he rejected the idea of creation and an external agency responsible for it [*attāno loko anabhissaro*. M.II.68]. Both for the phenomenon of life itself and for the various vicissitudes through which life passes like happiness and sorrow, health and disease etc. etc. the Buddha found the law of causal genesis [*paṭiccasamuppāda*] more valid and meaningful. It is abundantly clear that this process of causal origination does not deny unbroken continuity in the life process of psycho-physical evolution. Nor does it deny the unbroken moral responsibility associated with it. [Note the sequence in *upādānapaccayā bhavo bhavapaccayā jāti jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ* S.II.25]. Much less does it postulate the annihilation of man at death. On the other hand, there certainly were teachers, as recorded in the Sandaka Sutta, who held a rigid materialist view-point that man being composed entirely of material elements totally ceased to be at death [*Idha Sandaka ekacco satthā evamvādī hoti evamdīṭṭhī. Tesam tucchaṃ musā vilāpo ye keci atthikavādaṃ vadanti. Bāle ca paṇḍite ca kāyassa bheda ucchijjanti vinassanti na honti paraṃ maraṇā 'ti*. M.I.515]. Such a teacher would undoubtedly have been labelled nihilist and the Buddha, although completely unjustifiably, came to be accused so by an extension of the charge.

nature has already been comprehended by me [and

[17] *consequently the attachment to which has been renounced*],<sup>23</sup> it is towards that, that this kind of treatment is meted out.<sup>24</sup> Wherefore, monks, even if

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<sup>23</sup> The reference here is to the pañcakkhandha or the five aggregates which is the Buddhist concept of the psycho-physical being known as man which is no more than the phenomenal manifestation of the life process in samsāra.

Judging both by the spirit of Buddhist teachings and the tradition of Pali commentaries and parallel Chinese texts [Taisho.p.763.c.] it appears that the term *pariññā* or *pariññāta* is heavily impregnated with religio-ethical meaning. While it basically means knowing thoroughly and comprehending the nature of, it seems also to connote its inseparably associated idea which comes in the wake of knowledge, of rejecting, removing and discarding what is unwholesome. Even in *āsavakkhayañāṇa* it is the knowledge which brings about the total eradication of all defilements. It is no mere knowledge for its own sake. In fact, it appears that the early canonical contexts stress this latter meaning for *pariññā* [the verb is *parijānāti*] while they exclusively use the verb *pajānāti* to denote the former, viz. knowing and comprehending. [See M.I.88 ... *evaṃ kāmānaṃ assādaṃ assādato ādīnavañ ca ādīnavato nissaraṇaṃ ca nissaraṇato yathābhūtaṃ pajānānti, te vata, sāmaṃ vā kāme parijānissanti paraṃ vā tathattāya samādapessanti yathā paṭipanno kāme parijānissatīti thānametaṃ vijjati.*] This is perhaps what led to the interesting development at the commentarial level of the three-fold *pariññā* [*tīhi pariññāhi*] as *ñāṇa-* *tīraṇa-* and *pahāna-*, i.e. knowledge, decision and action. Action in this context is *pahāna* or final rejection. This means that once the real nature of a thing is comprehended, one does act or react in the fitting manner, to give up what is unwholesome and defiling. In between these two lies the decision to do so. But, in fact, these three phases seem to be more or less concurrent, with only the need to indicate their sequential inter-relatedness. Under the general category of what are to be given up in this manner are included all forms of grasping or *upādāna*. They are *kāmūpādāna*, *diṭṭhūpādāna*, *sīlabbatāupādāna* and *attavādaupādāna* [M.I.67].

<sup>24</sup> MLS.I.180 " This that was formerly thoroughly known, such kind of duties are to be done by me to it / by us to it."

The Wheel. p.16. "It is towards this [mind-body aggregate] which was formerly comprehended, that they perform such acts."

FDB.I. 99 "...he only thinks that such homage is consequent on the truth he mastered long ago." It has to be admitted that the translations of both MLS. and FDB. are incorrect. They completely miss the point of this statement in our sutta. It should also be noted that MLS's attempt at textual correction [at p.180. n.10] is questionable. The initial error is in the P.T.S. reading *tattha no*

others should revile, abuse, annoy you, there should be in you, no resentment, distress, dissatisfaction of mind concerning them. And wherefore, monks, even if others should revere, esteeni, respect and honour you, there should not be in you, joy, gladness, elation of mind, concerning them. And wherefore, monks, even if others should revere, esteem, respect and honour you, it should occur to you:' This whose nature has already been comprehended by me [and consequently the attachment to which has been renounced], it is towards that that this kind of treatment is meted out.

Wherefore, monks, what is not yours, put it away. Putting it away will be for a long time for your welfare and happiness. And what, monks, is not yours? Material shape, monks, is not yours; put it away, putting it away will be for a long time for your welfare and happiness. Feeling, monks, is not yours; put it away, putting it away will be for a long time for your welfare and happiness. Perception, monks, is not yours; put it away, putting it away will be for a long time for your welfare and happiness. The habitual tendencies, monks, are not yours; put them away, putting them away will be for a long time for your welfare and happiness. Consciousness is not yours; put it away, putting it away will be for a long time for your welfare and happiness. What do you think about this, monks? If a person were to gather or burn or do so as he pleases with the grass, twigs, branches, and foliage in this Jeta Grove, would it occur to you: The person is gathering us, he is burning us, he is doing as he pleases with us?

No, Lord. What is the reason for this? It is that this, Lord, is not oneself nor what belongs to self."

[18] `Even so, monks, what is not yours, put it away; putting it away will be

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*evarūpā* [M.I.140] where it should be *tattha ' me evarūpā* in both instances, the word used being *ime* [those] and not *me* [by me], as evidently clear from the commentary. Assuming *me* to be the correct reading, its plural form *no* [by us], has been substituted in the second context [P.T.S.]. For the correct reading of the text see BJTS. [Sinhala] M.I.350 and Naṇavimāla [Sinhala] M.I.152.

for a long time for your welfare and happiness. And what, monks, is not yours? Material shape, monks, is not yours ; put it away, putting it away will be for a long time for your welfare and happiness. Feeling .... Perception .... The habitual tendencies. Consciousness, monks, is not yours; put it away, putting it away will be for a long time for your welfare and happiness.

Thus, monks, is the dhamma well taught by me, made manifest, opened up, made known, stripped of its swathings. Because the dhamma has been well taught by me thus, made manifest, opened up, made known, stripped of its swathings, those monks who are perfected ones, the cankers destroyed, who have lived the life, done what was to be done, laid down the burden, attained their own goal, the fetter of becoming utterly destroyed, and who are freed by perfect profound knowledge, there is no more journeying for them in samaras which can be indicated as such.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, monks, is the dhamma well taught by me stripped of its swathings. Because the dhamma has been well taught by me thus stripped of its swathings, those monks in whom the five fetters binding to the lower [states] are got rid of, all these are of spontaneous uprising, attaining their final passing away in that state, not liable to return from that world. Thus, monks, is the dhamma well taught by me stripped of its swathings. Because the dhamma has been well taught by me thus stripped of its swathings, those monks in whom the three fetters are got rid of, in whom attachment, aversion and confusion are reduced, all these are once returners who, having come back to this world once, will make an end of anguish.

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<sup>25</sup> MLS.I.181 " ...the track of these cannot be discerned.

The Wheel. p.17. "...them is no [future] round of existence that can be ascribed to them."

FDB.I.100. "... there is no tracing of the course of those Almsmen who are Arahants.

For the reference to the process of journeying in samsāra as *vaṭṭaṃ vaṭṭati* or rolling on of the wheel of life, note this statement of the Mahānidāna sutta: *ettāvatā vaṭṭaṃ vaṭṭati itthattaṃ paññāpanāya yadidaṃ nāmarūpaṃ saha viññāṇena*. [D.II. 63 f].

Thus, monks, is the dhamma well taught by me stripped of its swathings. Because the dhamma has been well taught by me thus stripped of its swathings, these monks in whom the three fetters are got rid of, all these are stream attainers who, are not liable to decline and are assured of enlightenment in the end.

Thus, monks, is the dhamma well taught by me, made manifest, opened up, made known, stripped of its swathings. Because the dhamma has been well taught by me thus, made manifest opened up, made known, stripped of its swathings, all those who are pursuing the dhamma [*dhammānusārī*] and are pursuing with faith [*saddhānusārī*] are heading for enlightenment.<sup>26</sup>

[19] Thus, monks, is the *dhamma* well taught by me, made manifest, opened up, made known, stripped of its swathings. Because the *dhamma* has been well taught by me thus, made manifest, opened up, made known, stripped of its swathings, all those who have only faith in me, and only affection for me are heading for birth in heaven.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> MLS.I.182 "... are striving for dhamma, striving for faith are bound for awakening."

The Wheel. p.18 " .... are mature in dhamma, mature in faith, are all headed for full enlightenment."

FDB.I.100. "All those whose life accords with the Doctrine and with faith are all destined to win the fullest enlightenment."

In the scheme of Buddhist salvation, *dhammānusārī* and *saddhānusārī* mark the starting point of the spiritual ascent. The former who possesses a limited grasp of the dhamma [*Tathāgatappaveditā c'assa dhammā paññāya mattaso nijjhānaṃ khamantī*.M.I. 479] is further endowed with the basic requirement of the five faculties or instruments [*pañca indriya : saddhā, viriya, satī, samādhi* and *paññā*]. The latter, starting initially with *saddhā* and *pema*, faith in and love for the Buddha, is also said to be gifted with the same faculties. Differently equipped thus, though with a basic common core, they take off, as it were, from two different points on the same starting line, and speed up in the same direction. towards the same goal.

<sup>27</sup> MLS. I.182 "... who have enough faith in me, enough affection, are bound for heaven."

The Wheel. p.18. "...who have simply faith in me, simply love for me, are all destined for heaven."

Thus spoke the Lord. Delighted, these monks rejoiced in what the Lord had said.

## Appendix

[20] Regarding the final category of disciples who are said to be qualified only for birth in heavenly worlds [*saggā*], it is to be observed that they not only stand lowest in their spiritual quality but also belong to a different category, distinct and apart from those heading for enlightenment [*sambodhiparāyaṇā*]. It is clear from the sutta that this is due to their not being able to rise above the level of personal emotional attachment to the Buddha. Instances are not uncommon in the Buddhist texts of disciples who get rebirth in the heavenly worlds on account of the elation of their mind [*pasannacitta*] towards the Buddha. The Mahāparinibbāna Sutta D.II.141,143] speaks of the reward of birth in heaven not only for those who gladden their minds [*cittaṃ pasādetvā*] over the Buddha, but even for those who do so over a shrine or *thūpa* of a Buddhist disciple or a Cakkavatti king. Birth in heaven, it is clear in these cases, does not appear to be integrated into the salvation scheme in Buddhism. Given its true evaluation, it apparently mattered very little that it was listed in the sutta. On the other hand, the Cetokhila Sutta [M.I.102] lists a bhikkhu's aspiration to be born in the heavenly worlds as a reward for his practice of the religious life among factors that cause the barrenness of mind of the Buddhist disciple. In these instances, the heavenly worlds stand clearly outside the Buddhist salvation scheme. The Aṅguttara Nikāya further decries this where the Buddha is presented as saying to his disciples that they would naturally feel disgusted and insulted if they were told that they were living the life of *brahmacariya* under him for the purpose of gaining birth in heaven [A.I.115].

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FDB. I.100. All have but faith in me and love for me, have heaven as their destiny."

The Wheel, however, appears to be not unwilling to accept the Commentarial position that this perhaps refers to a state of bliss here on earth in consequence of insight development. See pp.xi and 39. This position is further examined in the appendix added to this work.

The Commentary to our sutta, evidently under the influence of a strong tradition which it inherits, appears to be reluctant to recognize two different and divergent goals in this list. It seeks to integrate *saggaparāyaṇa* with *sotāpanna*, etc. forming as it were one homogeneous grouping which ultimately ends up in *sambodhi*. Nevertheless, this commentarial tradition also appears to be conscious of the fact that *sagga* in the normal sense of the word is too far out of alignment with the Buddhist view of salvation. It appears to be known that it is not a place beyond the gravitational pull of *samsāra* and hence not conducive to a spirit of renunciation, its mainstay being the gratification of sense desires. [See SA.I 86. *Ayya devaputta devaloko nāmāyaṃ na samaṇadhammassa karaṇokāso. Sampattiṃ anubhavanokāso eso ' tī*].

In the attempt to get this category of disciples, who are said to possess only love for and faith in the Buddha and are, therefore, only qualified to be born in *sagga*, on to the Buddhist track of psycho-ethical intellectual development, the Commentarial tradition identifies them with a new group called the *vipassakas*. They are said to generate *saddhā* and *pema* through their *vipassanā*, and thereby experience, as it were, the bliss of heaven [*hatthe gahetvā sagge thapitā viya hontī*. MA.II. 120]. This commentarial explanation attempts to rule out the plausibility of a Buddhist disciple's going to a heavenly world which is mentioned in the sutta. There certainly seems to be doubt about the reality or the sensibility of a true Buddhist disciple journeying to heaven.

Putting this group in a new alignment in the scheme of salvation, it is said that their destiny is already known or guaranteed [*niyatagatika*], perhaps implying that they are assured of *sambodhi*. But in the sutta, and elsewhere in the canonical texts, the lowest group who are

[21] given this assurance [*niyata*] are the *sotāpannas*. The *dhammānusārī* and *saddhānusārī*, the group immediately below the *sotāpannas*, are said to move in the direction of *sambodhi* [*sambodhiparāyaṇā*], but no assurance of enlightenment is given to them. But the Commentary concedes this assurance to

the group even below them. Quoting traditional authority [Porāṇaka Thera], the Commentary goes still further and calls them junior *sotāpanna* or *cūlasotāpanna* [M.II.p.120], which is a definite and final bid to accommodate them in the regular scheme of Buddhist salvation.

But it appears to be far better to take note of the Buddha's recognition in this sutta of the irreconcilability in Buddhism of these two approaches in religion, namely the dynamic process of psycho-ethical development, which leads to *sambodhi* or enlightenment resulting in complete release, and the stagnant position of pure emotional mooring to religion through faith and devotion [*yesaṃ mayi saddhāmatṭaṃ pemamatṭaṃ*] which assures only a blissful sojourn in the heavenly worlds.

The story of the Samaṇa-devaputta in the Samyutta Nikaya [S.I.33] in which a Buddhist disciple vehemently protests at his " unexpected landing" in the heavenly world, saying, according to the Commentary, that this was not what he aspired for as the goal of his religious life [*Na mayā imaṃ thānaṃ patthetvā samaṇadhammo kato. Uttamatthaṃ arahattaṃ patthetvā kato ' ti: SA.I.86*] is ample testimony to this divergence. It is, however, interesting to observe that the Commentary on this strikes a cautious note, that this result of birth in heaven was due to a defect and deficiency in the religious life pursued for the attainment of arahantship [...*upanissayamandatāya āsavakkhayaṃ appatto tāvatimsabhavane paṭisandhiṃ aggahesi. ibid.*]

But this disciple, on being put back on the rails by the Buddha, in a truly Buddhist scheme of salvation, starts anew on the path to liberation by first attaining the state of *sotāpanna*. Thus we see even at this stage of commentarial interpretation, the orthodox position that the journey to salvation is via the four stages of the path and that the initial entry is through *sotāpatti* is vindicated, leaving the heavenly worlds on an entirely different trail.



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